

Having thus described the invention there is claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent:

1. A public access trash compaction system, the system comprising a cabinet, a trash compaction mechanism within the cabinet, the cabinet including a trash compaction compartment, a trash loading vestibule, the vestibule defining a downwardly sloped passageway, the vestibule having an entrance and a discharge outlet, the entrance being at a higher elevation than the discharge outlet, a trash loading carriage pivotally connected to the vestibule, the carriage including a first panel, which blocks the vestibule entrance when the carriage is in a first position, and a second panel, which blocks the discharge outlet when the carriage is pivoted to a second position, wherein the vestibule entrance is opened and wherein trash may be deposited upon the carriage, whereby when the carriage is pivoted to return to the first position, the trash load deposited on the carriage is discharged through the discharge outlet and into the trash compaction compartment.

2. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 wherein the trash loading carriage is biplanar and unitary.

3. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 wherein the first panel and the second panel of the carriage are planar and intersect at an obtuse angle.

4. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 wherein the trash loading carriage is pivotally connected to the vestibule adjacent a lower edge of the vestibule entrance.

5. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 wherein the first panel comprises a lid, the lid including a hand grip.

6. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 wherein the vestibule projects forwardly of a front cabinet surface.

7. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 wherein the downwardly sloped passageway includes a curved upper surface.

8. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 wherein the vestibule includes a pair of side walls, the carriage being positioned between the side walls, the carriage including laterally projecting journals, each journal being seated in a bearing surface of a side wall.

9. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 further including a trash container, the trash container being positioned in the trash compaction compartment, the trash load being deposited in the trash container,

the compaction mechanism including a ram, the ram being actuated to compress the deposited trash in the container.

10. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 wherein the compaction mechanism includes a ram, the ram being actuated to compact the trash discharged into the trash compaction compartment.

11. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 further including a battery power supply, whereby the cabinet may be strategically positioned in a public place remote from an electrical outlet.

12. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 further including a controller for controlling the operation of the compaction mechanism and a sensor for detecting when the deposited trash is in need of compaction, the sensor being operatively connected to the controller, the controller automatically operating the compaction mechanism when the deposited trash is in need of compaction.

13. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 1 further including a controller, a sensor for determining whether the volume of compacted trash within the cabinet has reached a predetermined level, the controller being operatively coupled to the sensor, the system further including a signal device for indicating that compacted trash is in need of collection, the signal device being operatively coupled to the controller, the controller determining when the trash load has

reached the predetermined level and actuating the signal device upon such occurrence.

14. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 13 wherein the signal device comprises a light.

15. A public access trash compaction system as constructed in accordance with claim 13 wherein the signal device for signaling comprises a radio signal transmitter.

16. A public access trash compaction system for use by the general public, the system comprising a cabinet, a trash compaction mechanism within the cabinet, the cabinet including a trash compaction compartment, a trash loading vestibule, the vestibule including a trash loading entrance and a discharge outlet, the discharge outlet for discharging trash into the trash compaction compartment, the trash loading entrance being at a higher elevation than the discharge outlet, a lid selectively closing the trash loading entrance, a panel selectively closing the discharge outlet when the lid is positioned to open the trash loading entrance and selectively opening the discharge outlet when the lid is positioned to close the trash loading entrance, whereby a trash load placed in the vestibule will be discharged into the trash compaction compartment when the lid is closed.

17. A public access trash compaction system for use by the general public as constructed in accordance with claim 16 wherein the vestibule extends forwardly of the cabinet.

18. A public access trash compaction system for use by the general public as constructed in accordance with claim 16 further including a trash loading carriage, the carriage comprising the lid and the panel.

19. A public access trash compaction system for use by the general public as constructed in accordance with claim 18 wherein the carriage is mounted for pivotal movement relative to the vestibule.

20. A method of providing safe access by the general public to a trash compactor for the deposit of trash, the method comprising the steps of:

a) providing a trash compactor having a normally closed trash loading entrance and a normally open trash discharge outlet for discharging trash into a trash compaction compartment,

b) providing a confined trash passageway between the trash loading entrance and the trash discharge outlet, the passageway being dimensioned to accommodate a trash load of a predetermined maximum size,

c) opening the trash loading entrance and closing the trash discharge outlet,

d) depositing a trash load in the passageway, and

e) discharging the trash load into the trash compaction compartment after closing the trash loading entrance and opening the trash discharge outlet.